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plurality of inventory categories, wherein said parts in at least one of said inventory categories are further sorted into a plurality of sub-inventory categories based upon part condition;

using said buyer computers to transmit part requests to said server computer; and

selecting one or more parts from said database in response to said requests.

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated March 27, 2002. By way of this amendment, claims 4, 5, 10, and 11 have been canceled, and claims 1 and 7 have been amended. Attached hereto is a marked-up version of the changes made to the claims by the current amendment. The attached paper is captioned "VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADE." Claims 1-3, 6-9, and 12 are currently pending in the application. Applicant hereby requests further examination and reconsideration in view of the following remarks.

Claim 4 has been objected to because of the use of the term "is" in line 2 instead of - - are - -. By way of this amendment, claim 4 has been canceled. It is respectfully submitted that the objection is now moot and should be withdrawn.

Claim 1-12 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. 102(a) as being clearly anticipated by U.S. Patent 5,895,454 (Harrington). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Independent claim 1 has been amended to recite, among other elements, that the parts in the database are sorted into a plurality of inventory categories, wherein the parts in at least one of the inventory categories are further sorted into a plurality of sub-inventory categories based upon part condition.

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Independent claim 7 has also been amended to recite similar limitations. Support for these amendments is found generally within the specification and drawings, and specifically at page 5, lines 25 through page 6, line 16, and in Figure 2.

Harrington is directed to an integrated interface for vendor/product oriented internet websites and discloses a networked computer system comprising an Internet-accessible database 10 which contains information on vendor products and services. A user may search the information in the database 10 and make a selection of a product, which causes the user to be directed to a vendor website 12. When the user elects to make a purchase, a transaction notification 33 is sent to the database administration software 21. At the conclusion of a shopping session, the database interface 24 transmits purchase/ordering data to the remote vendor site 12.

Harrington clearly fails to disclose that the database sorts parts into categories which are further divided into sub-categories which are based upon part condition. Harrington does disclose that products may be sorted into categories. However, even if the term "products" could be considered to include parts, Harrington only discloses very general types of product categories applicable to retail items, which are presumably in new condition, for example "electronic goods" or "toys" (see column 5, lines 35-40). In contrast, the present invention stores information about part condition which provides increased usefulness to purchasers of engine parts.

Accordingly, it is submitted that Harrington fails to disclose every element of amended claims 1 or 7 and the rejection should be withdrawn.

Claims 2, 3, 6, 8, 9, and 12 depend from independent claims 1 or 7 and are thus believed to be allowable for the reasons set forth above.

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In view of the above, it is submitted that the claims are in condition for allowance. Reconsideration of the objections and rejections is requested. Allowance of claims 1-3, 6-9, and 12 at an early date is solicited.

Respectfully submitted,

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VERSION WITH MARKINGS TO SHOW CHANGES MADEIN THE CLAIMS:

Claims 1 and 7 have been amended as follows:

Claim 1 (amended). A network-based parts distribution system comprising:

a plurality of buyer computers for operation by a system participant desiring to obtain one or more parts;

a plurality of seller computers for operation by a system participant desiring to sell one or more parts; and

at least one server computer, wherein said buyer computers, said seller computers and said server computer are interconnected as a computer network, said server computer being programmed to receive part related data from said seller computers and use said data to maintain a database of all available parts and to receive part requests from said buyer computers and select one or more parts from said database in response to said requests, wherein said parts in said database are sorted into a plurality of inventory categories, and wherein said parts in at least one of said inventory categories are further sorted into a plurality of sub-inventory categories based upon part condition.

Claim 7 (amended). A method of distributing parts, said method comprising the steps of:

providing a plurality of buyer computers for operation by a system participant desiring to obtain one or more parts;

providing a plurality of seller computers for operation by a system participant desiring to sell one or more parts;

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providing at least one server computer, wherein said buyer computers, said seller computers and said server computer are interconnected as a computer network;

using said seller computers to input part related data to said server computer;

using said data to maintain a database of all available parts, said step of maintaining said database including sorting said parts in said database into a plurality of inventory categories, wherein said parts in at least one of said inventory categories are further sorted into a plurality of sub-inventory categories based upon part condition;

using said buyer computers to transmit part requests to said server computer; and

selecting one or more parts from said database in response to said requests.